



Maine Developmental Disabilities

Testimony in favor of LD LD 1637 "An Act To Prevent Medicaid Payment from a Savings Account Established under the Federal ABLE Act of 2014"

Senator Gratwick, Representative Hymanson and the distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is Rachel Dyer, and I am the associate director of the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council. Councils on Developmental Disabilities were created through the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) in 1970. Maine's DD Council has been advocating for individuals with Developmental Disabilities (DD) for over 40 years. The DD Council is a federally-funded, independent organization with members from across the state, including persons with disabilities, family members, and representatives of public and private agencies which provide services and/or funding for services for individuals with developmental disabilities. As required in federal law, we are involved in advocacy, capacity building and systemic change activities, with the goal that individuals with developmental and other disabilities of all ages are fully included, integrated and involved in their communities and the decisions impacting their lives.

Please accept this testimony in favor of LD 1637 "An Act To Prevent Medicaid Payment from a Savings Account Established under the Federal ABLE Act of 2014"

The ABLE Act provides opportunities for individuals with disabilities or their families the opportunity to establish tax deferred savings accounts to maintain their independence, pursue their dreams and contribute to their communities by allowing individuals to amass assets to be used for qualified expenditures such as but not limited to education, transportation, assistive technology, employment training and support without becoming ineligible for means tested benefits such as SSI and Medicaid.

Developmental disabilities are serious lifelong disabilities affecting 3 or more areas of major life activity such as mobility, communication, and learning that require significant and ongoing services and supports. Mainers with developmental disabilities are overwhelmingly poor and rely upon Medicaid for health care as well as long term supports. Some of these services are not available through private health insurance nor even through private pay. Families and individuals with developmental disabilities are anxious to have this option in state. The DD Council strongly supports Maine's enabling this important option and appreciates Rep Libby's introducing this bill. Thank you for this opportunity to speak.

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